

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Call to Prayer issued for storm victims

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

A Call to Prayer on Sunday, May 15, for the victims of the record-setting storms that have spawned several deadly tornadoes so far this year in Mississippi and throughout the South has been made by Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

"I am going to ask for what many of you have already done..., and that is to have a special time of prayer for our storm ravaged state and region. I am going to ask you to pray for families who are grieving and seeking to recover from the loss of a family member, maybe a child. For others it may be the loss of a mom or dad, and for some it may be a brother or a sister. For all of us, it is one of our fellow Mississippians," Futral wrote in his weekly column in the May 5 issue of *The Baptist Record*, the news journal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

"Pray also for the many people who have lost homes, businesses, possessions, and irreplaceable memories. Pray for church families that day after day continue to try their best to carry others' burdens. Pray for our responders, those who are first responders, and those who are continuing to respond because of the enormity of the need and



SURVEYING DAMAGE — Allen Simpson (left), pastor of First Church, Amory, and Jim Harrington, Monroe Association missions director, discuss the tornado that brought down Smithville Church (background) during the unprecedented severe weather outbreak across the South on April 27. The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's main mass feeding unit is stationed at First Church, Amory, to provide hot meals to storm victims, volunteers, law enforcement officers, and others called to duty after the storms passed. (Photo by Barri A. Shirley)

the continuing storms that come. Fatigue that is physical, mental, and emotional sets in, and they need help and encouragement. While we have been focused on the Covering Mississippi in Prayer campaign for months, I am asking all of you, every one of us, to join together in praying for our Mississippi family," he wrote.

The Covering Mississippi in Prayer campaign, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board through the Mississippi Cooperative Program, is a year-long emphasis calling Mississippi Baptists to daily prayer. Prayer rallies were conducted in each of Mississippi's 82 counties during the months of January, February, and March, to kick off the emphasis. Tens of thousands of Mississippi Baptists have responded by signing commitment cards to pray daily throughout 2011.

Futral also called for a special offering on May 15 to support the efforts of the volunteers who are members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force.

"The second thing that I am asking all of our folks to do is to care. That care can be expressed in financial support. Some of you have already done this, but on May 15, I

trust that every one of our churches will support an opportunity for people to give. You can do it along with your church or simply send a gift to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. (Be sure to write "Miss. Disaster Relief" on the memo line.)," he wrote.

"The wonderful volunteers across our state with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force have been there on the scene doing whatever is needed to be done to help and to bring hope. Our folks are trained, prepared, and willing to be first responders, but it does not stop there for they remain responders after the initial wave. How thankful we are for what they do and the spirit with which they do it as they literally show up to serve the people and serve the Lord.

"Through your regular giving to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and especially to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, many of the needs are met. However, this unusual spring season of disaster has drained those resources to the point that we desperately need your help... none of these funds will be used for anything other than for disaster relief. All of our folks who are working as caregivers and responders are volunteers. These funds do not pay salaries or administrative overhead costs. We simply get the job done to help people in need," Futral wrote.



GROUNDLED — Jim Ray (left), manager of Central Hills Retreat near West, and Barri A. Shirley, associate executive director for business services for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, look over the 32-foot cross that was installed at the Mississippi Baptist campground the day before severe weather moved in on April 27 and toppled it. Plans are underway to repair and reinstall the cross. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Please turn to *Call to Prayer*, page 2

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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The lemon scenario

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a Mississippi Baptist volunteer was working at the shelter at her church when a woman in a car stopped her as she was crossing the street in front of the church's Family Life Center.

"Please help me," the woman in the car told the volunteer. "I have a trunk load of food to donate to your church's shelter and I don't know where to drop it off. Can you tell me?"

The volunteer was of course excited by this news and more than happy to direct the woman to the rear of the Family Life Center where donations were being accepted. As a matter of fact, the volunteer dropped what she was doing and met the woman at the designated area so she could help unload the food.

The woman got out of her car, popped the trunk lid, and proudly pointed to several dozen bags of... lemons. That's right. Hundreds and hundreds of lemons. Apparently she was driving by a local supermarket and spied the store's produce workers placing the out-of-date lemons in the dumpster. She pulled over, asked for the lemons, and the workers dumped them in her trunk instead of the dumpster.

Everyone is familiar with the axiom, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," but the donated lemons were well past their "sell by" date to start with — a food safety issue with legal ramifications — and the church volunteers were just too busy tending to the victims to stop what they were doing and come up with a practical use for this odd donation. There is no doubt that the woman's heart was in the right place and her motive was sincere, but her effort sadly had little effect on the needs of the hurricane victims at that church.

Unfortunately, this lemon scenario is in danger of being repeated in many ways across Mississippi as well-meaning, charitably-minded people seek to help victims of the violent weather that moved through the state over the past several weeks. Then there are the people who see this as a golden opportunity to jettison anything they no longer want in their houses.



There are many post-Katrina stories of truckloads of ragged used goods containing just one shoe of a pair and expired over-the-counter cold medicine. There are stories of eighteen-wheelers filled with used clothes for storm victims that simply had to dump their loads on the side of the road, because there was no place yet on the Coast to unload it, no one to help unload it, and the donors had not arranged beforehand to have all those details taken care of.

There are also stories of brand-new goods with nowhere to go and large amounts of fresh food spoilage — not because such supplies were unneeded after the hurricane, but because of the lack of knowledge about conditions on the Coast and a failure to coordinate with on-scene disaster relief responders. One anecdotal tale describes an entire truckload of fresh lettuce rotting in the truck because no one on the Coast had refrigeration for that much lettuce.

It's a shame whenever people's generous donations to disaster relief efforts end up on a trash heap somewhere along the storm's path. There is a solution. There is a better way.

People wishing to volunteer or make donations to the ongoing disaster relief effort can coordinate their plans with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force, whose volunteers deployed across the state almost before the winds died down. They've been there the whole time and know where there are needs to be met. In addition, the Mississippi Baptist Convention's massive network of churches, associations, auxiliaries, and other groups provide a wealth of information on just where the most critical needs are located, so that virtually nothing goes to waste for lack of planning and coordination.

More information about the ongoing disaster relief effort, including how to make much-needed cash gifts, can be found at www.mbcb.org.

Make your effort count for something. Our Christian witness during this relief and recovery period is too important to have a single effort wasted for lack of oversight and organization.

Let's do this the right way.

Call to Prayer (continued)

The complete version of Futral's column can be read on page four of this issue of The Baptist Record, and is available electronically at the convention board's web site: www.mbcb.org.

Meanwhile, Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force volunteers remain on active duty around the state, according to Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board where the Task Force is headquartered.

The Task Force's main feeding unit, a fully self-contained mobile kitchen built around a large tractor-tractor rig, is stationed in the parking lot of First Church, Amory, and preparing about 3,000 meals per day for storm victims, volunteers, law enforcement officers, and other response personnel who have been sent into some of the hardest hit areas. About 20 volunteers are manning the kitchen there, Gann said.

A feeding team is also working from the kitchen of Central

Hills Retreat near West. About six volunteers and the Central Hills kitchen staff are preparing meals there, Gann said, adding that a feeding unit stationed at a local church in the Lambert area of Quitman County is also preparing meals.

"Mississippi Baptist churches and associations in the storm areas have been very proactive in responding to the needs of storm victims, especially in preparing meals," Gann pointed out. "The churches in Webster County, for example, have gotten together and are taking care of feeding the victims and volunteers in that area."

Task Force chain saw teams continue to work in several areas of the state, Gann said, with new requests regularly being received. Mississippi Baptist chaplains have also been dispatched to the hardest-hit areas, he said.

Among the hardest-hit areas were Smithville in Monroe County, which was virtually destroyed by an EF-5 tornado

— the first top-of-the-scale EF-5 tornado to strike Mississippi since the Candlestick Park tornado in south Jackson in 1966. The community of Wren, also in Monroe County, suffered major damage. In addition, Gann said an area of south Lafayette County along County Road 442 sustained major damage.

Varying degrees of damage were recorded in many other areas of the state — almost too numerous to list, Gann said.

Central Hills Retreat, Mississippi Baptists' Royal Ambassadors campground near West, was struck by a tornado for the second time this year during the latest round of severe weather, according to camp manager Jim Ray. The first tornado touched down a few minutes into New Year's Day, and caused major damage.

The second tornado felled some timber and caused minor damage to other areas of the camp but will not affect any previously scheduled activities, Ray said. "Once we

were able to survey the camp after the second tornado, it was obvious to us that it won't have any effect on the schedule. Everything at Central Hills Retreat will go on as planned," he pointed out.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is accepting financial donations to assist the victims of the violent weather that moved through Mississippi. Checks should be made payable to MBCB, with "Miss. Disaster Relief" noted on the memo line. The address to mail donations is: Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

In-kind donations, such as food, clothing, or equipment, are not being accepted at this time. For more information regarding the ongoing relief effort, contact Carol Wright in the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the above address. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

USCIRF: Egypt is religious liberty violator

WASHINGTON (BP) — Egypt should be added to an infamous list of the world's worst violators of religious liberty, a bipartisan commission told the United States government April 28.

In issuing its annual report, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended for the first time in its nearly 13-year history the designation of Egypt as one of the "countries of particular concern" (CPCs).

The State Department has designated eight countries as CPCs: Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan.

Incidents of "severe religious freedom violations engaged in or tolerated by the [Egyptian] government have increased dramatically since the release of last year's report, with violence, including murder, escalating against Coptic Christians and other religious minorities," USCIRF Chairman Leonard Leo said in a statement released with the 2011 report.

The February resignation of President Hosni Mubarak in response to a popular uprising by Egyptians has not brought an improvement, Leo said. "In his waning months, religious freedom conditions were rapidly deteriorating," he said at a Washington, D.C., news conference accompanying the report's release, "and since his departure, we've seen nothing to indicate that these conditions have improved."



REPORT RELEASED — Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, gives part of the 2011 report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom at an April 28 news conference in Washington, D.C. (BP photo courtesy of USCIRF/ M. Anu Vakkalanka)

USCIRF — a nine-member panel that advises the White House, U.S. State Department, and U.S. Congress on the condition of religious freedom overseas — recommended the State Department maintain CPC status for the eight countries already bearing that designation.

In addition to Egypt, the panel recommended — as it had the two previous years — the addition of Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam to the CPC list.

The State Department, however, has not designated CPCs since President Obama took office in January 2009. Then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice issued the most recent CPC list only days before Obama's inauguration.

USCIRF also placed 11 countries on its "watch list": Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Laos, Russia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Venezuela. All were on the watch list last year. Watch list countries are those that do not reach the level of CPCs but "require close monitoring due to the nature and extent" of abuses of religious freedom, according to the commission.

In its report, the commission urged the Obama administration to announce its CPC

designations soon. It also called for the president to use the authority provided by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) in an effort to bring about progress for religious liberty in CPCs.

Eritrea is the only regime on the CPC list that has been sanctioned by the U.S. government precisely for religious liberty violations.

Egypt's failure to protect its own citizens against threats and violence by other citizens — what Leo referred to as "impunity" — is one of the reasons USCIRF recommended CPC status for the North African country. In addition to Coptic Christians, Muslims who are in disfavor also have been the victims of increasing attacks, Leo said.

In its report, USCIRF urged the U.S. government to use some of the funds it provides Egypt's military to strengthen the protection of religious minorities and their meeting sites.

Looking back

10 years ago

Membership in Southern Baptist Churches continues to climb toward the 16 million mark in 2000, with an increase of 108,552 bringing the total number of members to an all-time high of 15,960,308.

20 years ago

Don Stanfill, director of missions for Lafayette and Marshall Associations, reports there were 270 professions of faith, representing 64 churches in 17 denominations at a recent Jay Strack crusade held in north Mississippi.

50 years ago

The Clarke College Enlargement Campaign launches May 4, with the intent of raising a million dollars for building and endowment.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOPHER

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YMJ JSIX TK YMJ
JFWYM XMFQQ XJJ YMJ
XFQAFYNTS TK TZW
LTI.

NXFNFM KNKYD-
YBT:YJS

Clue: Q = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Exodus Fourteen: Thirteen

PRAYER AND CARE

The heart of Mississippi is breaking. In fact, all across the southwest and southeast in our country, storms have brought unparalleled destruction and indescribable pain. Here in our state the storms have touched north, south, central, and both sides of the state. We certainly are a people familiar with storms and disasters as we have experienced tornadoes and floods, and hurricanes and fires. This outbreak of bad weather with its rain, hail, tornadoes, and incredible straight line winds is the worst of all times. The storms have been everywhere in towns, cities, countrysides, and forests. You cannot drive very far across our state without seeing some of the scars. The destruction has taken with it houses, businesses, schools, churches, camps, and precious human lives.

What we have experienced from the very beginning of the year is more than likely not over. Historically, the worst month of the year for tornadoes is May. To add to that, the summer is being predicted to be an extreme year for hurricanes, and for flooding created by all of the rains up north coming down our Mississippi River. These beginning months of the year have been difficult and stressed-filled. In the midst of all of this are the human suffering, need, and bewilderment brought on by these disasters. The wonderful volunteers across our state with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force have been there on the scene doing whatever is needed to be done to help and to bring hope. Our folks are trained, prepared, and willing to be first responders, but it does not stop there for they remain responders after the initial wave. How thankful we are for what they do and the spirit with which they do it as they literally show up to serve the people and serve the Lord.

On May 15, in the middle of our worst tornado month, I am going to ask for what many of you have already done when you read this, and that is to have a special time of prayer for our storm ravaged state and region. I am going to ask you to pray for families who are grieving and seeking to recover from the loss of a family member, maybe a child. For others it may be the loss of a mom or dad, and for some it may be a brother or a sister. For all of us, it is one of our fellow Missisippians. The weather following the storms of the last week in April was absolutely gorgeous on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, but I can assure you that for thousands of these families the clouds and their grief are deep. Pray for them!

Pray also for the many people who have lost homes, businesses, possessions, and irreplaceable memories. Pray for church families that day after day continue to try their best to carry others' burdens. Pray for our responders, those who are first responders, and those who are continuing to respond because



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

of the enormity of the need and the continuing storms that come. Fatigue that is physical, mental, and emotional sets in, and they need help and encouragement. While we have been focused on the Covering Mississippi in Prayer campaign for months, I am asking all of you, every one of us, to join together in praying for our Mississippi family.

The second thing that I am asking all of our folks to do is to care. That care can be expressed in financial support. Some of you have already done this, but on May 15, I trust that every one of our churches will support an opportunity for people to give. You can do it along with your church or simply send a gift to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. (Be sure to write "Miss. Disaster Relief" on the memo line.)

The Scripture says that we are to weep for those who weep. Our state has been flowing with tears and it is a marvelous time and opportunity for us to care for one another. I am so blessed to live in this great state where there is a greater heart for giving to help those in need than

anywhere else in the nation. Will you capture this moment and take this opportunity of prayer and care that will literally touch people all across our state?

Two things I would like to point out about this May 15 offering for disaster relief. First, we do not usually make an appeal like this. Through your regular giving to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and especially to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, many of the needs are met. However, this unusual spring season of disaster has drained those resources to the point that we desperately need your help.

The other thing that I would point out is the fact that none of these funds will be used for anything other than for disaster relief. All of our folks who are working as caregivers and responders are volunteers. These funds do not pay salaries or administrative overhead costs. We simply get the job done to help people in need. The reality is that today you can help someone. Your help today may be helping you tomorrow, so join with all of the Mississippi Baptist family on May 15 and spend some moments in prayer and care.

Your expressions of faith and love will make a difference.

The author can be contacted at
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So. Baptist missionaries battling with 'Saint of Death'

LAREDO, Texas (BP) — They call her "La Santa Muerte," the Saint of Death, whose followers have multiplied rapidly over the last decade as violence has gripped Mexico and spilled across the border, according to missionaries who have witnessed the death cult's growing influence.

From Mexico City to border towns such as Laredo, and lately in large American cities such as Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Chicago, her cloaked, skeletal icon is usually depicted gripping the Grim Reaper's scythe and is often seen hanging from the windows, entryways, and sometimes embedded in the tattoos of her disciples.

Her appeal lies in basic human desires, especially those of the poor and drug runners who entreat her for protection and vengeance. "Healing, money, protection, or they want power," said Orpha Ortega, who along with her husband William serves as a Southern Baptist missionary in Mexico City.

The Santa Muerte cult is a growing concern for pastors in border towns such as Laredo, where a meeting hosted by Southern Baptist missionaries in January drew Spanish-

speaking pastors, church leaders, and at least one concerned police officer whose experiences at a local jail prompted him to attend.

The death cult figures prominently in the surging violence by Mexican drug traffickers known as narcos in interior Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexico border, William Ortega told those at the meeting.

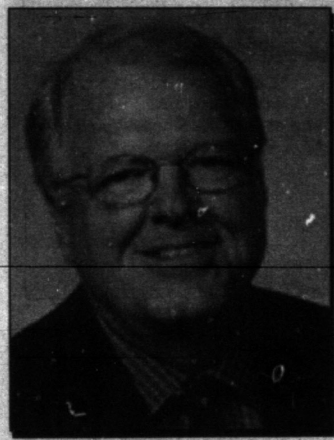
For six of the 12 years they've been in Mexico City, the Ortegas have ministered in the Tepito neighborhood, which is notorious for its thriving black market. Poverty, drugs, and violence are pervasive, and the largest shrine to Saint Death is an institution there. Of the 28 million people in Mexico City, about two million are estimated to be followers of Saint Death, Ortega said, with large numbers of them in Tepito.

The Ortegas welcomed the news in January that Mexican authorities had arrested the leader of the Tepito shrine and the closest thing the cult has to a high priest, David Romo, on kidnapping and money laundering charges.

Increasingly, the death cult has moved north, making inroads into border towns and American cities where Mexican immigrants find work. Ortega said adherents largely form two groups: drug dealers and the poor, with the former seeking protection from authorities and vengeance on their enemies, and the latter seeking healing, protection from the violence around them, and prosperity.

STAFF CHANGES

1. Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale, has called Donald Dunavant as pastor effective May 29.



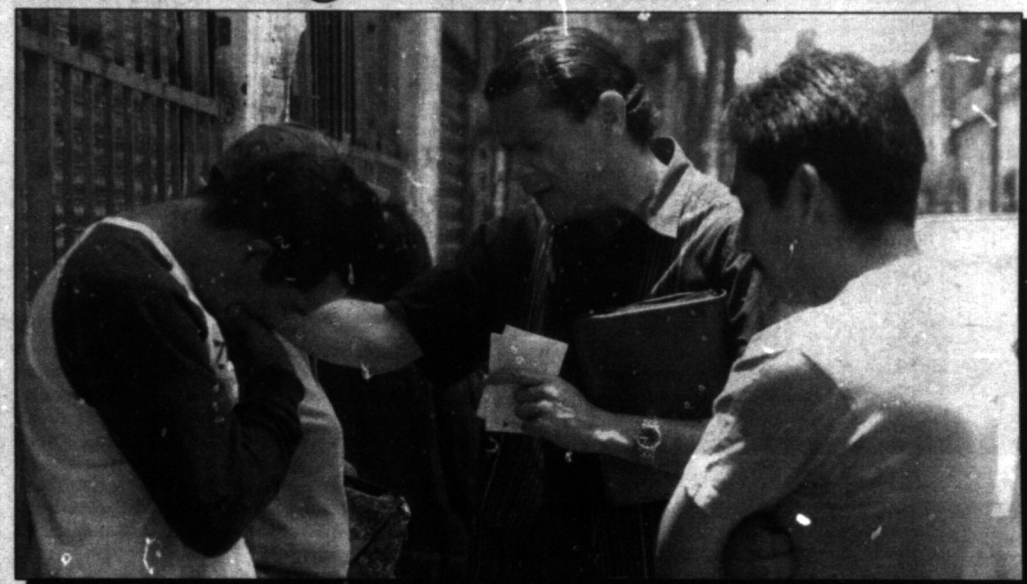
1. Dunavant

East Hill Baptist Church located in the City of Pensacola Florida is seeking a pastor to lead the church. The church currently has 570 members and average Sunday School attendance of 225. The successful candidate must meet the Biblical qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4. The church membership expects the successful candidate to have a minimum of 6 years of successful pastoral experience, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college plus seminary master's degree. Resumes will be accepted until June 30, 2011. Resumes including educational information, pastoral experience, personal skills, and at least three professional references are to be mailed or delivered to: Pastor Search Team Chair, East Hill Baptist Church, 3960 Spanish Trail, Pensacola, Florida 32504.

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VALLEY OF THE SHADOW — In Mexico City's notorious Tepito neighborhood, where the Saint of Death cult ("La Santa Muerte") has a stronghold, International Mission Board worker William Ortega and Mexican pastor Mauricio Rojas pray for a man battling addiction. (BP photo)

The death saint, her followers claim, offers all of the above.

A Baptist worker in the Laredo area told the Southern Baptist Texan, the news journal of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, that he hears testimonies of healing from cancer, AIDS, and other ailments at the hands of Saint Death, "but most of the time, their promise of healing or protection involves the killing of someone else in order to receive a miracle or in order to receive a protection."

That was one of the points Ortega emphasized during the Laredo meeting. In the Texas border town and across the Rio Grande in Nuevo Laredo is the largest number of Saint Death followers along the Rio Grande, Ortega said.

Often, Christians are seen as enemies of the cult for winning converts and refusing to syncretize (combine different elements of beliefs) between orthodox Christianity and the death cult.

Although the Mexican government officially removed Santa Muerte from its list of recognized religions in 2005 and the Roman Catholic Church has deemed it a pagan cult, many of its adherents are said to mix their Catholicism with Santa Muerte practices, the missionaries said.

With its authority in mostly oral tradition and its roots in ancient Aztec and Mayan death gods, the cult easily spreads its message through folklore. Worship practices include the placing of rum, flowers, or candy at the feet of a Santa Muerte altar, begging her favor in exchange for her favorite gifts.

In Mexico City, the Ortegas have had success in some areas

planting churches and winning converts, but they said in Tepito some of the churches don't last long "because they are weak Christians and it is hard for them to grow with all of the opposition around them," Orpha Ortega said.

"You can go there [to Tepito] and give them a tract and they will read it, but it's almost like fighting against Satan himself," Orpha Ortega said. "It's a real battle there. We still have not been harmed and are grateful to God for that, so continue praying for us to be strong and be brave and for other people for God to open their eyes."

In some border towns where many followers are either tied to drug cartels or are seeking protection from them, the rise of the death cult has posed major challenges. "It's affecting a lot," said one missionary working along the border. "First of all, they teach their followers they cannot talk to us. We are Christian, we are their enemies, they are taught."

"Secondly, they try to attack us in different ways. As a missionary here, they have threatened me, written notes. I've been on their watch list. It is spiritual warfare."

On the Texas side of the border, the missionary was quick to note that short-term missionary volunteers are relatively safe, explaining, "It is a problem for us because we are encountering them on a daily, long-term basis."

"Pray for safety while I'm doing the work. Pray for my integrity and holiness. Pray the Lord will provide the right leaders to provide churches. The only way we will win the fight is to plant those churches that preach the truth."

Bruno Molina, ministry associate for language evangelism at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, said the death cult "is a challenge to the Gospel not only in Mexico but increasingly beyond the U.S. border area into other areas of Texas. The very name of its representative organization, roughly translated as 'The Traditional Church of Mexico-USA,' implies that they do not see themselves as just a Mexican 'religious' phenomenon but that they lay claim to the U.S. as part of their cultic turf."

"They claim 1.5 million adherents here in the U.S. and, due to our shared border with Mexico, many of them necessarily reside in Texas. This is evident not only in our jails but also in Texas front yards that display Santa Muerte figures, cars and pickup trucks decorated with Santa Muerte decals, and people who are tattooed with Santa Muerte figures."

"The Santa Muerte cult is virulently anti-Christian in that it promotes devotion to someone, namely Saint Death, other than God through Jesus Christ. Our evangelism department is committed to exposing this challenge to the Gospel and working with our pastors to equip their church members to meet this challenge."

Orpha Ortega said she was faced with the cult's growing influence when she and William traveled to her son's college graduation last year in Lynchburg, Va., only to happen upon Santa Muerte paraphernalia for sale in a local store.

William Ortega said the couple is encouraged by the promises of 1 Corinthians 15:55-58, that the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ's victory.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



3. Sulphur Springs Church, Sebastopol



4. Providence Church, Carrollton



5. County Line Church, Union



6. Mass choir rehearsal

1. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is hosting a community singing May 21, 6 p.m., featuring New Destiny.

2. First Church, Eupora, will host a concert May 21, 7 p.m., featuring the Red Roots Trio and Long Way to Go. Call (662) 258-3491 or visit www.msgospelmusic.com for more information.

3. Sulphur Springs Church, Sebastopol, recognized a group of Sebastopol area National Guard members Apr. 27, with several local churches suspending their services to attend. The group was part of the First Battalion 204th Air Defense Artillery. Shown, from left, are SPC Tony Sistrunk, SPC Josh Jenkins, SGT Wesley Dennis, SPC Blake McDonald, SGT Brad McDonald, SPC Clay Beauchamp, and SGT Cody Espinoza.

4. Providence Church, Carrollton, held a baby dedication Mar. 20. Shown, from left, are Clay and Julia Beckwith with Cole DeLapp Beckwith and David Haggerty.

5. The senior adults from County Line Church, Union, recently attended the Jubilee Conference in Branson, Mo. Shown are the participants. David Jay, pastor.

6. The soprano section of the Legacy Renewal Revival mass choir is shown rehearsing in preparation for the revival event at First Church, Jackson, May 12 - 13. Thursday services, 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.; David Uth, speaker; Jim Whitmire, music.

7. Fellowship Church, Taylorsville, held a baby/child dedication recently. Shown are Derick and Cindy Benison with sons, along with Anthony and Lisa Shows with their daughter and son. Glen Shows, center, conducted the dedication.

8. The combined sanctuary choirs of Grandview Church and Trinity Church, Pearl, presented The King is Coming Apr. 17. Shown are the participants.

9. Members of First Church, Plantersville, placed fresh flowers on the cross Easter to symbolize the beauty of the resurrection. Shown are children with the cross.

10. First Church, Chicora, held an Easter egg hunt Apr. 21. Shown are the participants.



7. Fellowship Church, Taylorsville



8. Grandview and Trinity Churches, Pearl



9. First Church, Plantersville



10. First Church, Chicora

BIBLE DRILLS



1. Covenant Church, Lucedale



2a. Union Seminary Church, Jasper Association



2b. Union Seminary Church, Jasper Association



3. South Louisville Church, South Louisville



4. Attala Association

1. Covenant Church, Lucedale recognizes its Bible drillers. From top: Carey McLain, Dalton Welford, Mason McLain, and Alesha Washington.

2. Union Seminary Church, Jasper Association, recognizes its Bible drillers. Photo 2a, children, leader Sue Carol Green, Brennen Green, Bailey Hill, Landon Elkins, and leader Erin Miller; Photo 2b, Bible Buddies, Gabrielle Elkins, Brody Elkins, Meghan Cosper Gamache, Kyle Cosper, and leader Debbie Elkins.

3. South Louisville Church, Louisville, recognizes its Bible drillers. Front row, Kalie Parks, Brittany Jaudon; row two, Amber Rogers, Samantha Wilson, Carley Puckett, Jenna Lovorn; back row, Brandon Hemphill, Nicholas Davis, Erik Davis, Zachary Allen.

4. Attala Association recognizes its Bible drillers from First Church, Kosciusko; Center Church; and Louisville Church.

5. New Providence Church and Living Water Church, Copiah Association, recognizes its Bible drillers.

6. Indian Springs Church, Laurel, recognizes its Bible drillers.

7. Church Road Church, Horn Lake, recognizes its Bible drillers. Shown, photo a, are the children; photo b are the seven youth.



5. New Providence Church and Living Water Church, Copiah Association



6. Indian Springs Church, Laurel



7a. Church Road Church, Horn Lake children



7b. Church Road Church, Horn Lake youth



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Homosexual judge ruled on California's marriage law

SAN FRANCISCO (BP) — The landmark 2010 ruling that struck down California's constitutional marriage amendment should be vacated because the judge himself is in a long-term same sex relationship and in essence was a "judge in his own case," supporters of the amendment argued in a motion filed on April 25.

It was the first time that attorneys for ProtectMarriage.com, the group behind the amendment known as Prop 8, have raised the issue of Judge Vaughn Walker's sexuality. It comes less than a month after Walker, now retired, acknowledged in an interview with reporters that he has been in a relationship with a male physician for 10 years. That means he would have been in the relationship for about eight years when he took the case.

Prop 8, approved by voters in 2008, defined marriage as between a man and a woman and reversed a ruling by the California Supreme Court that had legalized same sex marriage. Walker's decision, if eventually affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, could lead to states being forced to recognize same sex marriage.

The motion was filed with Judge James Ware, who took

the case after Walker retired. Ware and Walker each were nominated by President George H.W. Bush.

Although there were rumors about his homosexuality during the trial, Walker did not acknowledge it until after he retired. "Fundamental to the integrity of the judicial function, and therefore to public confidence in the courts, is the judiciary's strict fidelity to the ancient maxim that 'no man can be a judge in his own case' and no man is permitted to try cases where he has an interest in the outcome," the brief said in quoting a 1955 Supreme Court case.

"This principle is expressed in the Code of Judicial Ethics and is codified in federal law by statutes requiring that a judge recuse himself whenever he has an 'interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding.'"

Walker had a duty to disclose "the facts concerning his relationship" and his "marriage intentions" but did not disclose either one, the motion states.

"If at any time while this case was pending before him," the motion says, "Chief Judge Walker and his partner determined that they desired, or might desire, to marry, Chief Judge Walker plainly had an

'interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding.' Indeed, such a personal interest in his own marriage would place Chief Judge Walker in precisely the same shoes as the two couples who brought the case. Such a clear and direct stake in the outcome would create a conflict, and recusal would have been mandatory."

Significantly, the attorneys for ProtectMarriage.com say they "are not suggesting that a gay or lesbian judge could not sit on this case," but they argue that Walker's relationship and his refusal to disclose it should have disqualified him. They also argue that Walker had a string of "irregular and unprecedented rulings" during the case that brings his impartiality into question.

He ordered ProtectMarriage.com to turn over its election year internal communications, an order that was overturned by the Ninth Circuit.

He was set to allow the trial to be broadcast on tape delay before the U.S. Supreme Court intervened and halted it.

He broke new ground by finding a federal right to same sex marriage — something that no state or federal appellate court had ever done.

• He held that homosexuals are a "suspect class," a legal term for a group that, like racial minorities and foreign-born citizens, qualify for special protection. That stands in contrast to the opposite conclusion by the 11 circuit courts that had considered the issue.

• He refused to stay the case pending an appeal. The ninth circuit eventually stepped in and issued a stay.

"The unprecedented, irregular, and/or peremptory nature of these rulings is difficult — very difficult — to take as the product of an objective, impartial judicial mind," the motion states.

Ed Whalen, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a blogger at NationalReview.com, is among those who think Walker should have recused

himself. Answering critics, Whalen said many people would find it unacceptable for a judge living in a polygamous relationship to judge a case about polygamy.

"Imagine, for example, that a federal judge was living in a polygamous household with three women in State X, that he was not married to any of them, and that he wanted to be married to all three simultaneously," Whalen wrote. "Would it be proper for this judge to preside over a lawsuit challenging the anti-polygamy laws of State X as violative of the federal Constitution?"

Attorneys for the Alliance Defense Fund, Cooper and Kirk, and the Law Office of Andrew Pugno are representing ProtectMarriage.com. The case is Perry v. Brown (formerly Perry v. Schwarzenegger).

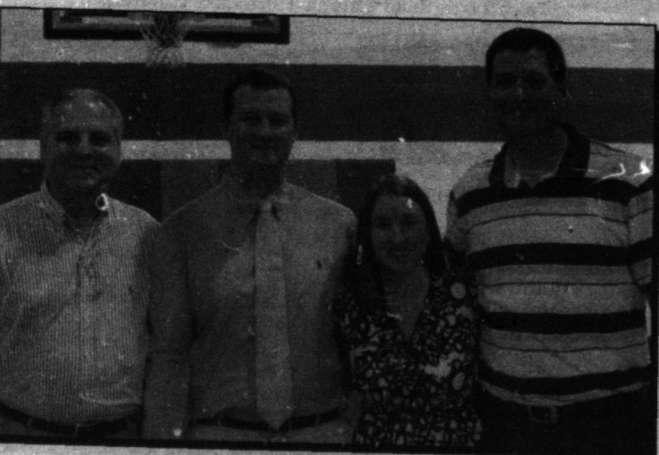
REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. Washington Church, Natchez: Homecoming, May 30; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and afternoon singing.
2. New Harmony Church, Philadelphia: Memorial Day/homecoming/100th anniversary celebration, May 15; services, 11 a.m., followed by dinner and anniversary celebration, 1:30 p.m.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Box and Reeder



3. Sullivan ordination

1. The Southern Seminary School of Church Music is holding a reunion July 11-12 in Louisville, Ky. For information or reservations, email at glorialandgrave@bellsouth.net, tbonesherm@insightbb.com, or call (502) 736-0600 or 425-5943.

2. First Church, Shannon, ordained Matthew Reeder to the gospel ministry Apr. 10. Shown are pastor John Box and Reeder.

3. Lighthouse Church, Greenville, ordained David Sullivan to the gospel ministry Apr. 3. Shown are pastor Jimmy McLendon, Sullivan, Leslie Sullivan and Bobby Edmiston.

4. A group of 24 adults, college students, and high school students went on an evangelism mission trip to Costa Rica Mar. 14-20, representing over a dozen churches in Scott, Rankin, and Hinds counties. Shown are the participants.

5. The children's choir of Robinwood Church, Saucier, recently participated in the Young Musician's Choir Festival at Mississippi College. Melissa Upchurch, director. Shown are the participants.



4. Costa Rica mission team



5. Robinwood Church, Saucier

Super Bowl coach encourages adults to get involved

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP) — Today's youth need adults to be actively involved in their lives to encourage them to be uncommon, former NFL coach Tony Dungy said. "You never know what small step can make a big difference in young people's lives."

Dungy, keynote speaker for the April 18 banquet in behalf of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., underscored the importance of children and teenagers being true to themselves and not simply following the crowd. "Too often, youth are bombarded with the messages that drugs and alcohol are OK, that education is not important, and that equal promiscuity is acceptable," Dungy said.

"Our young people aren't getting the whole truth," he stated. "That's why they need adults who are concerned about the welfare of society to invest themselves in young people's lives by volunteering for community organizations, he said."

"We're going to need some faith in action," Dungy said.

Following his remarks, Dungy answered questions from Union University President David S. Dockery, who asked how the coach managed to be successful at the NFL level while still being a "nice guy."

"I believe that Christ was really a nice guy, and He didn't finish last," Dungy said. "I felt that I could use God's principles and He would allow me to succeed."

Dungy also fielded a question about the current NFL labor dispute, saying he thinks

the matter will be resolved prior to the scheduled start of the 2011 season.

Dungy's wife Laurean, in comments prior to her husband's address, talked about the importance of supporting Christian education in today's society. She described the United States as being at a crossroads and said Americans may have to do things that make them uncomfortable as they seek to make a difference in the lives of others.

"We have to trust God and let Him help us through the doubts and fears that we may have," she said.

Dungy, in an interview during his visit to the Union campus, said he wishes men took fatherhood more seriously. "I think men really have to understand what our role is," said Dungy, a father of seven. "We haven't done a great job of that. I think we've kind of bought into the misconception that if we just provide financially, that's all that's important."

Too many men mistakenly believe that mothers are the primary ones to nurture and raise children, Dungy said.

"God didn't really intend it that way," he said. "Husband and wife, that's the way the family was set up to function the best. We've got to get back to that. There's so much that the dads bring to the table in terms of not just stability, but teaching and role modeling, for not only boys, but also for the daughters to see what their future husband should look like."

For Dungy, part of responsibility



CALL FOR FAITH — Tony Dungy (left) visits with Union University basketball players Antoine Hall (center) and Skyler Vaden prior to an address at the Jackson, Tenn., school. Dungy encouraged adults to get involved with youth through "faith in action." (BP photo)

ble fatherhood means making sure his family is actively involved in a local church. Families make friends and build relationships in a number of places such as school, work, and the local community, Dungy said.

"For us, those community relationships really do stem from the church," he said. "Growing, learning, but also just enjoying company of other people, especially believers."

The Dungy family are members of Central Tampa Church,

which began as a mission of Idlewild Church in Tampa, Fla.

Dungy became the first black coach to win the Super Bowl when he led the Indianapolis Colts to victory in 2007. He played three seasons in the NFL and held assistant coaching positions with the University of Minnesota, Pittsburgh Steelers, Kansas City Chiefs, and Minnesota Vikings before taking the head coaching job with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1996 and then the Colts in 2002. He retired from coaching in

2008 and now serves as an analyst for NBC's Football Night in America. He is also the author of two New York Times best-selling books: Quiet Strength, and Uncommon.

Dungy was the keynote speaker at Union University's third annual Roy L. White Legacy Golf and Gala at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson. The banquet drew about 1,500 people and completed a day that began with a golf tournament at the Jackson Country Club.

COLLEGE NEWS

The William Carey University Alumni Association recently inducted four outstanding graduates into its Hall of Fame. The alumni were Tony Gray (class of '78), Paul Sousa (class of '62), Donna Wheeler (class of '65), and Rear Admiral Richard C. Vinci (class of '66).

A graduate of the Winters School of Music, Tony Gray has spent over 28 years as a missionary to Brazil teaching and working in the areas of music, missions, and church planting. Twenty-two of those years were with the

International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and presently he is serving his sixth year with Pioneer Missions.

Paul Sousa, who played for the Crusader basketball team and graduated with a B.A. in physical education, has been heavily involved with the public school system in the Mobile, AL area for years. He taught algebra and coached basketball at Clark Middle School and Montgomery High School before becoming head principal of Murphy High School in 1987. In 1992, he became

superintendent of Mobile County Public Schools, where he directed an achievement program that resulted in higher Stanford Achievement Test scores, and put Mobile above the national average. In 1998, he was named "Superintendent of the Year," primarily for his achievement of retiring the school's debt of \$30 million.

After Donna Wheeler received a degree in secretarial science from WCU, she devoted herself to the college through positions in student affairs, admissions, and the president's office before becoming alumni director in 1989. She gave more than 40 years of service and the alumni building now bears her name. In 2006, she completed a pictorial history of Carey for the centennial celebration. Wheeler taught preschoolers for more than 25 years at her local church. She is a member of Hestians, a local women's organization, and she served as first vice-president in 2007.



William Carey University

Rear Admiral Richard C. Vinci credits Carey's science department and the late Rose West for preparing him for acceptance into Louisiana State University School of Dentistry. During his past 42 years of active duty, Rear Admiral Vinci has served in a number of commands including Second Dental

Battalion, First Dental Battalion at Naval Dental Command, Commanding Officer of Naval Dental Center, Navy Medical Inspector General and Chief of Navy Dental Corps. Currently, he is serving at the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, D.C., as Deputy.

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

FEBRUARY 2011

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Use Your Influence

Esther 4:13-17, 8:3-8

By Bobby McKay

Each year the most widely viewed time of television in our country is the Super Bowl. However, what contributes to its popularity has nothing to do with the love of football. Many that watch the game do not know the difference in a quarterback and linebacker, but they still watch with great interest. The reason for this irony? The commercials. The Super Bowl has long been known for the advertisements that air during the game's three hour broadcast. Most are humorous. Some are sentimental, and others are immoral. These range of companies and industries spent somewhere in the neighborhood of 2.5 million dollars this past year for a 30 second commercial. What would make a business want to take such a risk? The reason is

influence. While it seems ridiculous to many of us a company would spend that amount of money for a brief commercial, think about the revenue potential. It is estimated that one billion watch the Super Bowl. Using those numbers, that means a company is only paying about \$400 to advertise to each person. Their clear motivation is influence and in reality, it is inexpensive. If the secular world can spend money and time with such ease to influence each of us to buy things we most often do not need, how are we using our God-given influence in our church to change our communities? Numerous people have rejected the word influence as something that should not be exerted within the walls of a church building. We have all been witness to where the



McKay

wrong kind of influence can harm the bride of Christ and her testimony. Let me encourage you to embrace the idea of influence. Whether we realize it or not, we influence those around us. Are we using that influence in a healthy or a harmful manner? Our example this week is found in the great book of Esther and the influence of Mordecai on her life.

Recognize

Esther 4:13-14 sheds a light on the idea of our circumstances and possibilities. Mordecai challenged Esther with the thought that God had a purpose in placing her in her position. I have been blessed with a handful of close friends and mentors that challenge me in my ministry, thinking, and even my personal times with God. A person that is wise with his or her influence will help others recognize their potential in Christ. You may see God

working in the life of someone you deeply care about and they need to be encouraged or even motivated. Your words may be the gateway in which they notice the hand of God in their life. Take the time to recognize how you are influencing those around you. Are you helping or hindering them to see God and His plan for their lives?

Realize

Of course, we cannot have a balanced view of influence without one basic fact. That fact is that we must realize that God is the Ultimate Influencer. When Esther asked the Jews to fast for her, she was acknowledging that God was the One in complete control. I received an encouraging e-mail from a church member last year which I saved, that illustrates this point. This kind lady wrote, "Please stay connected with our Lord, so that you can help us. When distractions and frustrations come, may HE help you to remain true to your calling. It strengthens me to know that as I am connected to Him, I can better connect with

people. Realize that you and I alone are unable to change anyone for the better. But with God working through us, remarkable things can happen.

Utilize

In closing, a simple question. Are we utilizing our influence in Godly ways? In Esther 8:3-8 we see how she approaches the earthly king, Ahasuerus. Although God would bless Esther's efforts and fulfill His purpose in her life, she still had to exercise humility and respect before the king's throne. It is not enough to know you are doing what God is leading you to do. We must act graciously and lovingly with all people for God to receive the total praise. We must ask ourselves, "Am I using my influence for my benefit or that God will be exalted?" If your desire is the exaltation of God; you will be blessed, and it is a lot more memorable than a million dollar commercial for Pepsi or pizza!

McKay is pastor of Harpersville Church, Harpersville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Keeping the Truth

Colossians 2:8-23

By Cyndi Grace

"If I thought I had to believe Christianity was the only way, I could not be a Christian." These words are from a book entitled, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* written by theologian Marcus Borg. Further reading claimed the resurrection story was concocted by the disciples to comfort the grieving followers. He also wrote Jesus was not the Son of God and never claimed to be; Jesus was merely a "social savior" to teach us how to care for others. Borg and other theologians are a part of "The Jesus Seminar" which meets to discuss the "fallacies" of the Bible and to "explain" truth. They have a massive following because what they teach is intellectual, requires nothing and promotes life with no

consequences. Sadly, Borg's teachings are just the tip of the iceberg of "fine sounding arguments" in our culture today. They look good and they appear Christian but they are not truth and they are dangerous. This is not new. The Colossians dealt with pagan and Gnostic religious beliefs and many were being lured away by the intellectual arguments. We talked last week that a young Christian must be taught how to live the Christian life. Paul's cry to them in verse 6-7 was to continue to live in Christ...and then he uses the word "rooted" and built up (established HCSB) in Christ just as he had taught them.

I am an inside kind of girl but my husband loves to work in the yard. "We" were redoing the flowerbeds last week and began to remove the old plants.



Grace

As the digging began it became apparent this was not going to be an easy job, for there were roots deeply entrenched from the plants that had been there for years. They were firmly attached and it took a massive amount of energy (his, not mine!) to remove them. In our Christian lives, the roots that enable us to stand are *strong doctrine*. Many shy away from that word because it sounds profound but it is merely a word defining our Christian beliefs.

Essential doctrines of the Christian faith are:

- There is One God
- Belief in the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)
- Christ's Deity and Humanity while on earth
- Christ's Virgin Birth
- Christ's Bodily Resurrection
- Salvation through grace by faith
- Jesus the only way to God
- The Bible is God's inerrant word

We *must* know what we believe on these issues and we, as mature Christians must be able to teach these essentials to others. Most false doctrines will attack one or more of these essentials, therefore, we must teach these absolute truths without variance, no matter how fine sounding the opposing arguments might be. In times of testing holding on to these truths will give us victory. That was Paul's encouragement to the Colossians in this letter.

II Timothy 4:3 states, "For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will accumulate teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new." (HCSB) We have come to that time, my friends, and what we believe is more important than ever. Weekly we are losing people from our congregations because we have neglected to teach these essentials. They are being lured away by deception. Someone has said, "When we don't know what we believe we will believe anything!" This

must change for we are losing the battle among our next generation. We are fighting over worship traditions instead of teaching truth. We must teach truth above all!

In the Jesus Movement of the 70's I was blessed to be in a church that saw my youthful exuberance for Jesus as a good thing. They didn't understand it and it wasn't what they were accustomed to but they looked at my heart. The youth leaders and staff at FBC Long Beach took my friends and me under their wings (long hair, guitars, and all) and lovingly taught us strong Christian doctrine to accompany our joy. Because of this, these long years later, I have a strong root system that gives me the strength to stand in the midst of deception. What are you teaching? It is important to know! Hold strong to biblical doctrine, teach others, and stand firm. That will insure we will keep the truth alive and well!

Grace is a conference speaker and Bible teacher and is a member of First Church, Clinton.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the *who, what, when, where* details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number. Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

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THE BAPTIST
Record

Kelley: seminaries on verge of 'Rubicon moment'

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) is facing a critical moment in its history, President Chuck Kelley said in his annual State of the Seminary address to students, faculty, and staff April 14. While it can be uncomfortable at times, Kelley said, NOBTS is prepared to embrace change to continue its God-given task.

Kelley titled his address, A Rubicon Moment — a reference to crucial time in the history of the Roman Empire. Under Roman law, generals were forbidden to cross the Rubicon River with armed troops. To do so was considered a capital offense.

However, Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his army as he headed toward Rome in 49 B.C. For Julius Caesar, who was intent on ruling the empire, the Rubicon River was a point of no return.

"Crossing the Rubicon was irrevocable. It was either become the emperor or die," Kelley said. "[Crossing the Rubicon] has become an idiom in our language, a commonly accepted phrase for very big decisions with great consequences. Here we are at a moment of profound significance for New Orleans Seminary and for our future. The seminary experience is being redefined for the 21st century."

Kelley identified four areas of sweeping change facing the seminary:

- the decreasing role of geography.
- the relationship of people to information.
- the rise of social media.
- the cafeteria approach to ministerial training.

These changing dynamics, Kelley said, will redefine how NOBTS trains ministers for the local church and missionaries for the ends of the earth. "We are embracing this reality, understanding that we are redefining NOBTS and how we approach our task," he said.

The role of geography in higher education is decreasing in significance, Kelley said. Today, 55% of NOBTS students attend extension centers across the Southeast. The remaining 45% attend the main campus.

Increasing numbers of main campus students commute more than an hour to take classes. More students are taking advantage of Internet training as well. "The role of geography has not been eliminated, but it is greatly diminished," Kelley said. "There are far more options available."

The second key factor in the new education paradigm — how people access information — is reflected by the rise of Google, Kelley said. "Google has changed the relationship of people to information. For the last 300 or 400 years, information has been collected on college, university and seminary campuses... You went to the collected information to learn. Today the information is available anywhere you want, just Google it."

Rather than primarily dispensing information, Kelley said, educators will spend much more of their time helping students evaluate information.

The dramatic growth and acceptance of how Facebook is changing the way people relate to one another, Kelley said, demonstrates that social media increasingly will play an important role in education.

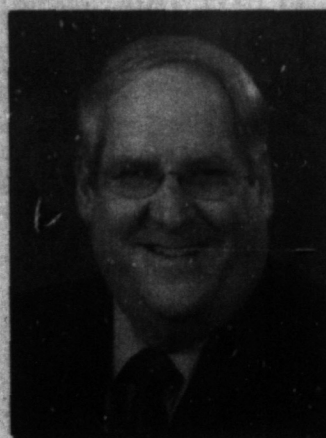
Perhaps the most important change facing NOBTS is a cafeteria approach to seminary training, Kelley said. In a cafeteria the customer picks and chooses the food he or she wants. Cafeterias reject the one-size-fits-all approach to food.

Kelley stated that NOBTS will thrive in the midst of these sweeping changes by effectively delivering theological education in as many ways as possible — a cafeteria approach to seminary training.

"We will make some form of theological education available to every God-called man or woman on the face of the earth," Kelley said. "Do you realize this is the first time in human history that a seminary could have that as its goal and mission?"

Reaching this goal will require flexible scheduling and multiple delivery systems, Kelley said, adding that, most of all, the training options must be kept affordable.

Training will be focused on developing effective, fruitful ministers of the Gospel for ministry in local churches and on the mission field, Kelley said, and certificate and degree plans will emphasize biblical literacy, Christian worldview development, vibrant Christ-centered spirituality, and relationship skills.



Kelley

NOBTS was not caught off-guard by the sweeping changes, Kelley said. In fact, another Rubicon moment, Hurricane Katrina offered a preview of the future. The seminary was forced to deliver ministerial training in unique ways following the 2005 storm. Geography played less of a role in how information was delivered. Lessons learned through the Katrina experience, Kelley said, help position NOBTS to face the changing dynamics in theological education.

In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, Kelley and the NOBTS administrative team faced what he describes as a "Ready, Fire, Aim" experience. The team met for strategic planning for the future in the midst of great uncertainty. "We had to make decisions

before we had all the information," Kelley said.

During that time, the administrators anticipated a time when fewer students would attend the main campus and more would choose extension center and online training options. They began the process of enhancing current points of access (extension center and online learning) and developing new ones (hybrid courses which use the Internet with a limited number of in-class meetings).

At that time, Kelley began using the cafeteria motif to describe the seminary's commitment to provide multiple delivery systems and multiple training/degree options.

What the team could not anticipate was the nationwide recession and the downturn in Cooperative Program giving within the Southern Baptist Convention. They also did not anticipate how quickly other schools would adopt similar educational philosophies and models.

Despite all these changes, Kelley said NOBTS will continue offering high-quality, traditional campus-based training in New Orleans. In addition to the comprehensive residential approach, NOBTS will continue offering extension center programs and Internet programs.

The seminary is also developing more praxis-based mentoring programs and visitor learning opportunities which require intensive, short-term training opportunities.

Survey shows doubts about global warming growing among pastors

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Protestant pastors are more skeptical about global warming today than they were two years ago.

That is the finding of a LifeWay Research telephone survey of 1,000 randomly selected Protestant pastors. The survey also found that pastors' views on the subject vary widely by denomination, education, location, and political ideology.

When asked to respond to the statement, "I believe global warming is real and manmade," 41% of pastors strongly disagree, up from 27% in a similar survey conducted in 2008. That marks an increase of more than 50%.

According to the new survey which is based on data collected in October, 19% of pastors somewhat disagree with the statement, 13% somewhat agree, and 23% strongly agree. Combining the answers, 60% disagree and 36% agree. Twenty-five percent strongly agreed in 2008 that global warming is real and manmade.

According to the Pew Research Center, this trend among pastors parallels a trend among Americans in general. Between 2008 and 2010, the percentage of Americans who said there is no solid evidence that the earth is warming increased from 21% to 32%, Pew said. In addition, in 2010, 34% said the earth is warming because of human activity, down from 47% in 2008.

"Pastors' sentiments on global warming have shifted right in step with Americans in general," said Scott

McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "The number of pastors who are firmly convinced global warming is manmade has not changed much, but many who were beginning to agree during the 2008 election cycle now strongly disagree."

Evangelical and mainline pastors are divided on global warming:

- 68% of evangelicals disagree strongly or somewhat that global warming is real and manmade, compared with 45% of mainline pastors. Forty-four percent of evangelicals strongly disagree, but only 30% of mainline pastors feel the same.
- 39% of mainline pastors strongly agree that global warming is real and manmade, but only 14% of evangelical pastors strongly agree.

The survey also found a deep political divide on the issue among pastors. A full 65% of pastors who are Democrats strongly agree, along with 24% of Independents and six percent of Republicans that global warming is real and manmade — but 57 percent of pastors who are Republicans strongly disagree, along with 36% of Independents and six percent of Democrats.

Among pastors who describe their political ideology as progressive or liberal, 78% strongly agree that global warming is real and manmade. Yet only seven percent of conservative pastors and six percent of very conservative pastors strongly agree.

Sixty-nine percent of those labeling themselves very conservative strongly

disagree. Forty-seven percent of conservatives and three percent of progressives and liberals strongly disagree.

Half of Protestant pastors (52%) address the issue of the environment to their churches once a year or less — virtually unchanged compared to 2008 (50%).

Pastors who consider themselves evangelical speak to their churches on the environment less often than mainline pastors. While 49% of evangelicals address the environment once a year or more, 67% of mainline pastors address it once a year or more.

'Cross and Switchblade' author killed in Texas traffic accident

NEW YORK (BP and local reports) — David Wilkerson, author of the book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, and the founding pastor of Times Square Church in New York City, died in a car wreck April 27 at the age of 79. His wife Gwen was injured in the wreck and is in the hospital.

The Christian Post and CBN reported that Wilkerson was driving east on U.S. 175 near Tyler, Texas, when his car "moved into the opposite lane where a tractor trailer was driving westbound." The truck collided with Wilkerson's car head-on, CBN reported.

Wilkerson also was the founder of Teen Challenge, a ministry for drug addicts. *The Cross and the Switchblade* was once rated No. 32 on Christianity Today's list of the Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelicals.

A private funeral was held May 2 at Rose Heights Church of God in Tyler. A memorial service will be held at Times Square Church in New York City on May 14 at 2 p.m. The service will be streamed live worldwide via the church's website.

Southern Baptist leaders used their Twitter accounts to mourn Wilkerson's death and celebrate his ministry. Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church in Springdale, Ar., pointed users to a popular message by Wilkerson entitled, *Call to Anguish*. Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church in Plano, Texas, and a former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Wilkerson's book had a "huge" influence on him as a teen.